

# Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission



## Annual Program Year Activity Report

Covering the Period July 1, 2013 — June 30, 2014

Enhancing Communities and  
Enriching Their Futures

**SSC  
RPC**

Springfield-Sangamon County  
Regional Planning Commission



# Reviewing the Commission's Program Year

## Enhancing Communities and Enriching Their Futures

While many in the region may not realize it, for over 50 years the Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) and its predecessor agencies have been charged with two important tasks that affect every resident in Sangamon County: helping local leaders to envision a rich future for those who live in the region, and identifying the actions that can be taken in the present to achieve that vision. It is not a simple task, and to accomplish it the SSCRPC has taken as its mission providing the professional expertise and objective analysis that communities in Sangamon County need to assess their opportunities, sharpen their visions, and design the strategies needed to achieve them.

To fulfill this mission, the Planning Commission must do four things: *advise* the jurisdictions it serves; help them conduct the *planning* necessary to arrive at the future they desire; *evaluate* the region and its communities' progress toward achieving their visions; and, as required, provide the *leadership* necessary to help these visions become reality.

The activities and efforts of the Commission and its staff range from the small to the large, but every one of them is intended to improve the lives of residents in the region in some way; be the task reviewing the plans for a proposed subdivision, analyzing the potential effects of a zoning decision, providing demographic data for a grant proposal, coordinating and managing the planning of the regional transportation network, or coordinating a team of citizens looking at ways to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of local government.

We believe that the various projects and activities conducted by the SSCRPC staff during the past program year are indica-

tive of the Commission staff's on-going professional commitment to enhancing communities in the region and enriching the lives of those who live there.

To conduct the projects and programs intended to achieve this end, the SSCRPC's staff is organized into five work groups, each responsible for a portfolio of activities. These include an Administrative group which oversees and coordinates the Commission's various efforts, as well as four program groups responsible for core aspects of the SSCRPC's mission. These four groups are responsible for the Commission's activities related to local and regional Strategic and Comprehensive Planning, Transportation Planning, Development Planning, and a Land Use and Environmental Planning. The following sections of this annual activity report provide highlights pertaining to some of the contributions each group made to the enhancement and enrichment of the communities in the region this past program year.

We hope that this report provides the SSCRPC's Commissioners, local leaders, and the general public with at least an overview of the important work that the Commission's staff carried out during the past year. We believe that it demonstrates some of the ways in which the Planning Commission is working to enhance Sangamon County and its communities, helping to enrich the futures of those who live in the region now, as well as those who will live here in the future.

**E. Norman Sims, Executive Director**

**Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission.**

*Respectfully submitted July 2014*



## THE COMMISSION'S LEADERSHIP DURING THE PROGRAM YEAR

### Membership as of June 1, 2014

#### 2013-2014 Officers and Members of the Executive Policy Board:

**Mr. Brad Mills**, Chairman, Citizen Member, City of Springfield.  
**Mr. Kenneth Springs**, Vice Chairman, Citizen Member, Sangamon County.  
**Mr. Bruce Strom**, Secretary, Citizen Member, City of Springfield.  
**Hon. Mike Houston**, Mayor, City of Springfield (Mr. Mike Farmer).  
**Hon. Andy Van Meter**, Chairman, Sangamon County Board (Mr. Brian McFadden).  
**Mr. Jeff Vose**, Regional Superintendent of Schools (Ms. Shannon Fehrholz / Mr. Lyle Wind).  
**Mr. Eric Hansen**, Citizen Member, Sangamon County, Immediate Past Chairman, member-at-large.

#### Other Commission Members:

**Mr. Brian Brewer**, Chairman, Springfield Mass Transit District (Mr. Frank Squires).  
**Hon. Sam Cahnman**, Alderman, Springfield (Mr. Joe Davis).  
**Mr. Dick Ciotti**, Chairman, Springfield Metro Sanitary District (Mr. Gregg Humphrey).  
**Hon. Andy Goleman**, Member, Sangamon County Board (Mr. Charlie Stratton).  
**Mr. Larry Hamlin**, Citizen Member, Sangamon County.  
**Hon. Cory Jobe**, Alderman, Springfield.  
**Mr. Bill Moss**, Vice Chairman, Citizen Member, City of Springfield.  
**Hon. Greg Stumpf**, Member, Sangamon County Board.  
**Ms. Leslie Sgro**, President, Springfield Park District (Mr. Elliott McKinley).  
**Mr. Frank Vala**, Chairman, Springfield Airport Authority (Mr. Roger Blickensderfer).

(Indicates member's officially designated representative).





## FINANCES: Revenues and Expenditures (rounded to nearest dollar), Dec. 1, 2012, through Nov. 30, 2013. Does not include Sangamon County Department of Zoning.

### FY2014 PROPOSED BUDGET SUBMISSION & DETAIL FOR THE SPRINGFIELD-SANGAMON COUNTY REGIONAL PLANNING COMMISSION

For the Period  
December 1, 2013 – November 30, 2014

As Submitted to  
The Planning Commission's Executive Policy Board  
by the Executive Director  
October 16, 2013

For Submission to the  
Sangamon County Board

#### PACKET CONTENTS

FY14 Budget Highlights	Page 2
Revenue Highlights	Page 3
Expenditure Highlights	Page 4
Challenges	
Tables & Charts	Page 6
Revenue: Anticipated Receipts by Revenue Type	Page 7
Revenue: Anticipated Receipts by Source and Purpose	Page 7
Transportation FY14 Proposed Direct Expenses	Page 7
Expenses: Anticipated Disbursements by Type	Page 8
Budget Comparison: FY13 Adopted vs. Proposed FY14 by Expenditure Line	Page 9
Additional Revenue Going to General Fund	Page 10
Comparison Fiscal Year	Page 11
Established Program and Staff Structure: FY 2014	Page 12



#### REVENUES:

General Planning - City of Springfield	\$166,832
General Planning – Sangamon County	351,948
Transportation Study	364,611
Mass Transit Study	106,381
Marketing Materials - SMTD	15,661
Regional Comprehensive Planning Grant	113,923
Rural Comprehensive Planning Grant	7,397
Citizen's Efficiency Com. Research & Analysis	25,000
Other Projects	8,647
Reimbursed Expenses	1,464

**TOTAL REVENUES** **\$1,161,864**

#### EXPENDITURES:

Personnel	\$650,107
Boards, Commission & Committees	3,950
Fringe Benefits	263,365
Materials & Supplies	6,808
Printing	976
Meetings & Dues	4,305
Travel & Mileage	3,377
Equipment Maintenance	3,943
Publications	2,446
Postage	2,475
Contractual Services	87,252
Allocated Administrative Costs	149,513
Equipment Purchases	3,756
Depreciation	1,071

**TOTAL EXPENDITURES** **\$1,183,344**

### Concerning the Commission's Budget and Finances

The column to the left provides information concerning the Commission's revenues and expenditures — rounded to the nearest dollar — from Dec. 1, 2012, through Nov. 30, 2013, the last audited year. The reader will note that expenditures are shown as exceeding revenues by \$21,480. However, the difference in the amount of Revenue and Expenditures is due to the fact that the SSRPC bills on a quarterly basis. Therefore, two months worth of expenditures are included in the financial statement that are not billed out until the quarterly billing is done in January for the period of October – December.

The SSRPC's financial planning must take into account a number of factors each year. The first is that the Commission must operate under four different fiscal years.

As per its establishing ordinance, the Commission's budgeting must be done based upon the Sangamon County fiscal year, which runs from December to the following November. However, the Commission receives funding from the City of Springfield, the State of Illinois, and the Federal government, all of which have fiscal years that differ from the County's as well as one another's. These years also differ from the Commission's program year, which runs from July 1 until June 30 of the following year, and which is the period covered by this report.

In addition, the Commission often competes for and is awarded grants and contracts during each fiscal year. These opportunities may be unknown when the budget is prepared because of the various project years used by the granting agencies. These grants and contracts often have project period with specified beginning and ending dates that are different from the governmental fiscal years noted above.

This requires that the Commission staff pay close attention to both budgeting and the management of the resources it receives, and is one of the reasons why the SSRPC is the subject of two audits each year: the Sangamon County audit and a separate independent audit of the Commission's finances.

# Thinking Strategically About Tomorrow...and the Days After

## The Work of the Comprehensive and Strategic Planning Group

In the effort to enhance our communities and enrich their futures, no planning portfolio of the SSCRPC has a broader scope or larger vantage point than that of the Strategic and Comprehensive Planning (S&CP) group. This group is sometimes known as the “think tank” of the SSCRPC, because it works to synthesize and analyze data dealt with by the other planning groups, adding to it trend data from an array of sources, and then applying this information to specific communities to assist them in making better-informed long-term decisions about their futures.

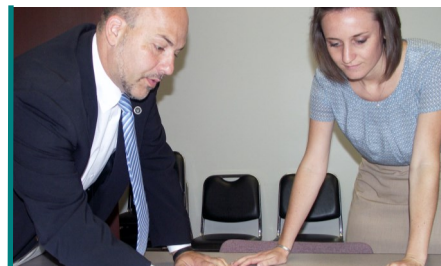
Comprehensive planning is one of the most important investments a community can make in its future. The S&CP group’s foundational task is the development of community comprehensive plans. Governed by state statute, comprehensive plans address communities’ land use, economic development, demographic trends, transportation, infrastructure, and environmental factors, as well as strategies and tactics that can be utilized in pursuit of improvements in these areas. In the last five years, SSCRPC staff has developed or is in the process of developing comprehensive plans for half a dozen of the region’s communities, with additional plans in its project “pipeline.”

Since communities are also enhanced and enriched by their connections to one another, in addition to developing local comprehensive plans, the S&CP group deals with over-arching regional goals. Most notably, this has culminated during PY 2013-2014 in the development of a Regional Strategic Plan addressing the long-term future of the entire Sangamon County region and its many communities. This plan points toward a vital-cycle of regional growth, highlighting the importance of institutionalizing the connecting factors that keep the region strong. The S&CP team is also engaged in efforts to assist the newly-established Regional Leadership Council in strengthening its capacity to implement Regional Strategic Plan components.

In order to be adequately equipped to address these trends, the S&CP group must remain proactively aware of factors impacting quality of life in the region. To assist in this, the group’s planning portfolio includes benchmarking, performance measurement, and data analysis. Analyses and peer comparisons such as *SangStat*, the 2010 Census Analysis, and the Resilience Capacity Index study, bolster on-going efforts to stay informed regarding the region’s competitive standing and, in turn, utilize available resources as tools to encourage on-going development and improvement.

Finally, the information derived from each of these analyses, plans, and reports equips the group to address many special projects and planning needs in the region. Planning efforts for specific neighborhoods and corridors, data collection for community requests, reports highlighting trends of interest and import for the region, and other similar projects to catalyze community engagement toward more thoughtful and intentional decision-making, all fall within S&CP’s purview. Most notably, the group was responsible in the last year for significant staff support for the Citizens’ Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County, and has also recently provided assistance for the Enos Park Neighborhood Association and the MacArthur Boulevard Master Plan.

Strategic and Comprehensive Planning is an essential service for our communities, assisting the region in fitting together relevant information and targeting it to lay the appropriate groundwork for richer futures in the many communities that form the region. S&CP’s work products also highlight the vital importance of much of the work done by the remainder of SSCRPC staff, particularly through the emphasis its work lends to the essential concept of plan implementation.



## PY 2013-14 Comprehensive and Strategic Planning Projects

### Regional Strategic Plan

- Regional Strategic Plan for Sangamon County
- Public outreach for Regional Plan implementation
- Staff support to Regional Leadership Council (on-going)

### Local Comprehensive Plans

- Leland Grove Comprehensive Plan
- Riverton Comprehensive Plan (under development)
- Dawson Comprehensive Plan (under development)

### Special Projects

- Development of CEC initial term Recommendations and Final Report
- Staff support to Citizens’ Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County (on-going)
- Electric Aggregation program management and miscellaneous County Board initiatives
- Smart Cities Pilot Program development (on-going)
- Assistance to the Enos Park Neighborhood Association
- Update of Neighborhood Appearance Survey (under development)
- Assistance with Long Range Rural Transportation Planning (on-going)

### Benchmarking and Performance Measurement

- Update of *SangStat* Benchmarking Analysis
- 2010 Census Analysis
- Resilience Capacity Index Peer Comparison Report

- Public Infrastructure Best Practices Report (on-going)

### Data Analysis and Special Requests

- Sangamon County Community Survey development assistance
- Illinois Century Network Effectiveness Assessment grant proposal
- Data collection for CWLP Water Demand Analysis and various community requests



## ASSISTING THE REGIONAL LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

To ensure that the insights uncovered in the process of developing the Regional Strategic Plan are not lost, the SSCRPC set about during the current planning year to contribute to the ongoing success of the Regional Leadership Council, a mayors' caucus that had developed in the course of the regional planning process and with the assistance and guidance of the Citizens' Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County (CEC). This group of mayors began meeting on an ad hoc basis early in the process of developing the Regional Strategic Plan, and was formalized in response to the CEC's "Leaders' Peer Networks" Recommendation.

The Leadership Council formally approved bylaws in fall of 2013, and elected officers at that time. It includes the chief elected officials from all municipalities in the region, as well as the County Board Chair. Its purpose is to provide a forum through which chief elected local officials or their representatives may cooperatively plan, act jointly and develop consensus on public policy issues affecting the region.

Its goals include, but are not limited to: expanding cooperation among and between the local units of government in the county; reducing the unnecessary duplication of services; improving communication among municipalities and other units of government; sharing information and increasing administrative capacity; and through interaction, increasing the capacity of municipal leaders in Sangamon County to solve local and regional problems and make effective use of new opportunities.

Thus far, the RLC has worked to address a number of regional policy issues, collaborating on items such as electric aggregation, animal control fee structure updates, and an ongoing review of regional fire and EMS services. SSCRPC staff has provided administrative assistance in the set-up of this body, and have assisted in catalyzing the activities of this important group, which will serve as an on-going platform for plan implementation.



## The Sangamon Regional Strategic Plan

The Regional Strategic Plan for Sangamon County, one of the most critically important SSCRPC projects completed during this planning year, has been under development for several years. It culminates the efforts of numerous study groups of community experts, numerous public workshops and community outreach exercises, and various community survey collection efforts. The Regional Strategic Plan outlines a strategic approach for the Sangamon County region to take in maintaining and strengthening its competitive standing as a place to live, work and play in the coming twenty-five years.

The Plan identifies a "vital cycle" that represents the SSCRPC's vision for long-term success in the region, including four cyclical stages: Intentional Growth, Resource Preservation, Collaborative Vision, and Capacity Building. This vital cycle is intended to help the region understand how it can maintain its current positive attributes, expand on them in thoughtful ways, work together as it does so, and put structures in place to sustain these efforts on an on-going basis.

This cycle applies to a number of areas of emphasis explored in the plan, including Community Character and Growth; Heritage, Cultural, and Recreational Resources; Transportation and Public Infrastructure; Agriculture and Rural Communities; Economic Development and Regional Readiness; and Government Efficiency and Cooperation. The plan develops a series of strategies and action steps relevant to sustaining the vital cycle in each of these areas, and identifies implementation partners for each.

The plan then outlines land use principles for use in applying these strategies to specific geographies, which will be achieved in the next phase of this planning process, through the development of a land use map for the unincorporated area. Finally, underscoring its emphasis on connecting communities to enhance their collective well-being, the plan highlights key corridors where communities can unite with one another by emphasizing a cohesive look and feel for connecting areas.

The Regional Strategic Plan and its components are significant for Sangamon County. A cohesive vision that can be shared across the many municipalities in the county will assist in understanding and implementing actions that will bolster the region's competitive standing and quality of life for residents.



# Supporting Greater Efficiency & Effectiveness

## Work is Completed with Original Citizens' Efficiency Commission and a New CEC Begins Work

A project of significant impact for the SSCRPC over the last two years was providing staff support to the Citizens' Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County. This project provided opportunity for SSCRPC staff to enhance our communities by working to find ways that local governments can provide better services at lower costs.

The CEC was established by referendum in 2010 following a County Board resolution, with the mission of improving local government services through increased collaboration and cooperation across the many layers and units of local government in the region. As the 23 member volunteer body began its work, it turned to the SSCRPC for staff support, per its establishing resolution. The SSCRPC assisted the CEC in developing a philosophy and process for developing its recommendations. SSCRPC staff then provided staff support for the CEC throughout its first term of nearly three years, assisting in managing logistics, the CEC's research agenda, and considerable research and analysis. The CEC's four committees ultimately developed 23 recommendations and 10 white papers, as well as an interim report and a final report, with the SSCRPC's assistance.

The SSCRPC considers the work of the CEC among its most impactful projects in the last decade, with great potential to enrich the futures of our communities. This importance stems not only from the specific recommendations the CEC developed related to matters such as fire protection, township governance, law enforcement, and "back office" functional consolidations, but most notably from the themes it uncovered in the course of its work.

These themes included: the importance of working across jurisdictional lines; the necessity of targeting structural changes; the value of understanding and overcoming statutory limitations; the citizens' role in achieving the vision; and the need for a new way of doing business among local governments.

As these themes suggest, the CEC found that most of its specific recommendations addressed only symptoms of problems with local governments, not their root causes. While many reform efforts emphasize structural changes, problems often center on the

need for professionalization in *governance*, not overhaul of *government*. The CEC noted that many local governments would like to function efficiently and effectively, but don't have the resources, data, plans, or expertise to do so. Accordingly, much of the CEC's final report works to identify areas where ongoing improvements in efficiency and effectiveness could be created by addressing these challenges.

Following the CEC's final report, the Sangamon County board felt it would be of value to extend the CEC for another term of three years. It asked the public whether it supported this continuation via two referenda on the primary ballot in spring of 2014, which received 68% and 72% affirmative votes. SSCRPC staff sees this as a mandate for continued CEC efforts, and now looks forward to assisting the renewed CEC in continuing research. More importantly, the SSCRPC is enthusiastic about the CEC's new opportunity to work toward implementing its recommendations. Without efforts at implementation on the part of local governments, the CEC's work will, in the long run, have significantly less value.

Nevertheless, because of its efforts to help the CEC understand the chief issues facing local governments in an environment of declining resources, and in turn, to assist localities in developing the tools to rectify these concerns, the SSCRPC feels that its work with the CEC has tremendous value in improving long-term efficiency and effectiveness in government.

As the CEC Commissioners noted in their most recent report: *"The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission provided the professional staff and expertise required to conduct the research and ground CEC recommendations in solid information. In addition, the staff and its able leadership provided access to local government process and venues that, left to its own efforts, might well have been inaccessible to the CEC. But perhaps most importantly, the Regional Planning Commission staff brought with it an intractable commitment to quality in all its endeavors."*



## "What I See" Neighborhood Appearance Survey

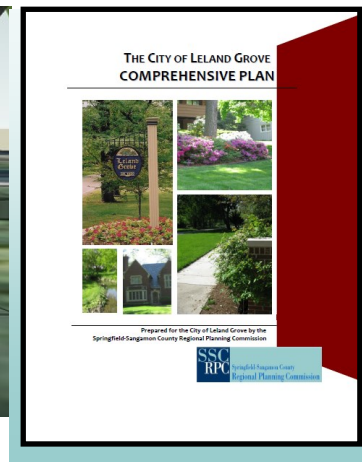
The SSCRPC is convinced that an essential portion of community well-being in the region is the vitality of its neighborhoods.

Following its successful and impactful collaboration with the Enos Park Neighborhood Improvement Association and work with neighborhoods surrounding MacArthur Blvd. on the development of a plan for that corridor, the SSCRPC has continued to explore opportunities for strengthening neighborhoods as a vital community resource.

In the 2013-2014 year, this resulted in the development and deployment of a Neighborhood Survey in partnership with the University of Illinois' Office of Survey Research. This survey has already generated a robust response, as residents appear eager to contribute their insights about the appearance of their neighborhood and how it might be improved toward their goals for an ideal neighborhood.

This project will assist the SSCRPC in strengthening neighborhood capacity and targeting neighborhood improvement through increased information in the coming year. Neighborhoods represent a vital aspect of our communities, and this survey will provide local leaders with tools to enhance the built environment in which citizens live, providing a better future for them along the way through the implementation of planning initiatives.





## Local Comprehensive Plans

The foundation of community well-being is good community planning. Having a comprehensive plan in place equips a community to respond to challenges and obstacles with long-term goals in mind. It also prepares a community to be development ready so that growth opportunities are not overlooked and can occur within an intentional and orderly context. This ensures that communities are ready for opportunities to enhance their resources, that they are equipped to respond to inevitable change effectively, and that they can have an enriched overall future by achieving defined goals and actions steps.

A major component of the SSRPC's work is to pursue long-range comprehensive planning for municipalities in Sangamon County. Over the last several years, the SSRPC has engaged in the development of numerous community comprehensive plans.

When assisting a community with comprehensive planning, SSRPC staff works with local leaders to conduct land use inventories and analysis, environmental assessments and utility studies, population and growth analysis, and studies of transportation, community facilities, and other needs. This assists the SSRPC in developing local goals and objectives, as well as a land use map. The SSRPC also conducts a community survey and several public workshops to ensure local investment in and ownership of an engaging community plan.

Planning horizons for these projects typically extend twenty years into the future, and SSRPC staff encouraged communities to keep their plan up to date by reviewing and revamping them every five to ten years.

During the 2013-2014 program year, SSRPC staff completed work with the City of Leland Grove on its comprehensive plan. This plan represented a unique challenge to SSRPC staff because of Leland Grove's already-developed nature. The SSRPC identified ways that Leland Grove can better utilize its strengths as a "community within a community" and can undertake targeted improvements to enhance community quality of life and safety.

Although the SSRPC typically limits itself to one plan per year, SSRPC this year have also begun to work with the Villages of Riverton and Dawson on Comprehensive Plans. Robust community survey responses have been collected, and SSRPC staff is in the preliminary phases of reviewing infrastructure and community assets while working toward draft plan components.

### Demographic Analysis & Performance Measurement

Continuing its prior-year effort to provide data collection and analysis to local leaders, the SSRPC added a number of resources to its performance measurement and data toolkit during PY 2013-14. Building upon the updates *SangStat* regional benchmarking tool, the SSRPC assisted the University of Illinois at Springfield with developing and deploying its survey of community indicators.

Most significant among its data resource projects, SSRPC staff completed an analysis of the 2010 Census this program year. The Census Analysis provides an overview of demographic data in the areas of population, age, race, housing, education, and income components relevant to overall community well-being. This analysis is based on data collected in 2010 and released in 2012, and compares trends within various areas of the region.

The SSRPC found several trends to be of significant import in terms of decision-making for ensuring a vibrant future for local communities. The growth rate of the region is slowing, the population is aging, single-parent households are increasing, and these trends are occurring in scattered pockets throughout the county, not evenly across the region. Community leaders will need to pay attention to these relevant trends to ensure that these factors do not inhibit long-term community well-being.

Building upon this analysis, SSRPC also developed a peer comparison benchmarking document utilizing the State University of New York's Resilience Capacity Index. This index uses 12 metrics to test a community's ability to "bounce back" to its original economic strength after a downturn. This report found that the Springfield metro area compared favorably with several central Illinois peers, largely due to its community connectivity capacity. However, it identified economic diversification and business environment as concerns the region needs to address to secure its favorable resilience status.

Finally, SSRPC staff also continued to provide information concerning local demographic and economic trends to local officials and the public. Targeted geographic areas have also received attention in terms of both benchmarking and basic demographic and economic data. East side census tracts, regional water demand data, and similar projects were part of the SSRPC's data collection and provision efforts during the current program year.

# Planning for Tomorrow's Transportation Needs.

## The Work of the Commission's Transportation Planning Group

Transportation – you can't get there without it. Whether you travel in a car, on a bus, on two wheels, or two feet through the greater Springfield area, you are using part of the transportation system being planned through the Springfield Area Transportation Study (SATS), the Federally designated Metropolitan Planning Organization for the area. Most of the planning activities conducted by the Transportation Group support the work of SATS.

SATS planning efforts are undertaken for the central, urban part of Sangamon County extending roughly from Sherman through Chatham and from Curran to Riverton/Rochester. Federal transportation funding is made available to urban areas engaged in a continuing, cooperative, comprehensive planning process. SATS fulfills this requirement through a Policy Committee and a Technical Committee. And it all starts with the Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP).

With the multi-modal transportation network, many transportation jurisdictions, various transportation funding sources and programs, and the need for interconnection within and between travel modes, a long-term transportation system vision forms the basis for effective and efficient, not piecemeal and disconnected, transportation system development.

The LRTP is updated every five years and SATS is currently going through the process of creating a version that looks out to 2040. Utilizing demographics, public input, transportation system data, and growth projections, goals for meeting future travel demand will be created. The LRTP will then present an envisioned road, bicycle, pedestrian, and public transit service network for the area. Specific projects and activities will be identified to develop these networks and further the transportation planning process.

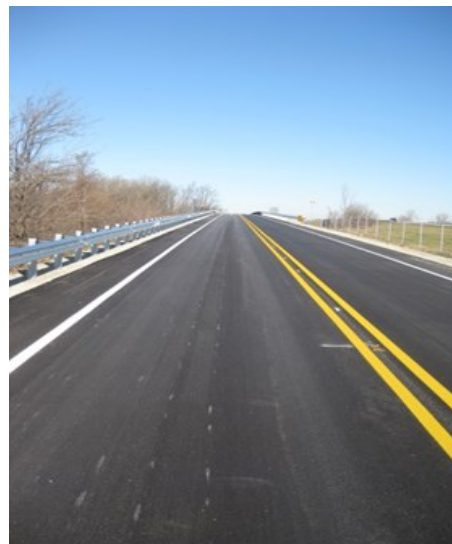
Each year transportation projects, based in the LRTP, are selected for implementation based on local priority and available

funding. These projects are listed in the annual Transportation Improvement Program (TIP). The TIP, along with all SATS plans and reports, is available on the Planning Commission website.

To further implement the LRTP, an annual Unified Planning Work Program is prepared that outlines all the transportation planning activities to be undertaken by SATS and the SSCRPC Transportation Group over a one year period. These tasks are varied and many and often are required to maintain community eligibility for federal transportation grants.

The Transportation Group does not operate in a vacuum however, and continually coordinates with other SSCRPC staff, community leaders, agencies, organizations, and the public, to move the area toward a first-class, safe, efficient, and effective transportation system for travelers of all mobility abilities, local residents and visitors alike, utilizing all modes of transportation in our area.

On occasion funding becomes available for transportation planning projects in the rural parts of the county, which offers the opportunity for the SSCRPC's Transportation Group to expand efforts to the interconnectedness of networks in the entire county.



## PY 2013-14 Transportation Projects

### SATS ACTIVITIES:

2035 Long Range Transportation Plan (LRTP) Activities:

- Four-Year Progress Report
- Began update to 2040
- Conducted public input and engagement activities to update LRTP

Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) Activities:

- FY 2013 Annual Listing of Federally Obligated Projects
- Closed-out FY 2013-2016 TIP
- Prepared FY 2014-2017 TIP

Other Activities Supporting the LRTP:

- FY 2015 Unified Planning Work Program
- Master Road Network Database
- Developable Areas Mapping
- 2014 Springfield Central Area Parking Survey
- Travel Demand Model update
- Micro-grants to four communities for Pavement Preservation Plans
- Curb Your Car Week Promotion
- North Grand Avenue Conceptualization Project
- Peoria Road Illustrative Project

### NON-SATS ACTIVITIES:

Update of Springfield Mass Transit District schedule brochures

Rural Sangamon County Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan

Sangamon County Rural Transit-Transfer Facilities Conceptualization Plan





## Where Technology Takes Transportation Planning

Since 2009, the SSCRPC has been utilizing the countywide SATS Travel Demand Model developed in coordination with LSA Associates, Inc. to evaluate planned and proposed transportation projects to gain a better understanding of their possible impacts to the region. Over the last 5 years, staff has worked with SATS to analyze projects included in the Transportation Improvement Program, Long Range Transportation Plan and more. Development of a micro simulation model to evaluate the effects of the proposed high speed rail corridor scenarios in the area was possible with such a model in place.

Throughout much of FY 2014, staff once again worked with LSA Associates, Inc. to update the SATS Travel Demand Model. The model has been updated to include current data for the roadway network and employment figures throughout the entire county. The update process was undertaken in tandem with the lead up to the development of the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan. With the updated model now in place, the SSCRPC and SATS are positioned to evaluate possible projects throughout Sangamon County prior to spending the limited funding available to implement them. The SATS Travel Demand Model is one of many powerful technological solutions utilized by the SSCRPC Transportation Planning staff.

Geographic Information Systems or GIS provide the backbone for much of the mapping work completed by the SSCRPC which is then incorporated into most projects undertaken by the Transportation Planning staff. GIS al-

lows for vast databases of geographic based data and their attributes to be stored and displayed in a whole host of methods. Throughout FY 2014, staff has harnessed GIS to develop the framework of the Travel Demand Model, support the development of the 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan, update SMTD route maps, complete the annual Parking Survey, maintain a comprehensive roadway network database, and much more.

Transportation Planning staff also looked to technological solutions for public outreach efforts throughout FY 2014. A critical element of the Long Range Transportation Plan update was the ability to connect with members of the general public in the SATS planning area and gather their input regarding transportation in the area. After looking at a number of products, staff settled on Google Forms to create a citizen survey. Google Forms has the advantage of being free, easy to use and recognizable to the user. In total, 523 surveys were received, over 2.5 times more than the survey completed for the 2035 Long Range Transportation Plan developed throughout 2009 and 2010. Google Forms was also selected to track participation in the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Curb Your Car Week Event organized and promoted by the SSCRPC.

The Transportation Planning staff have integrated technological solutions where appropriate and have achieved increased efficiencies and opened up new opportunities in a number of situations. Moving forward, staff will continue to evaluate and explore new technologies and utilize them when working with SATS and the general public.

## SATS 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan Schedule

### 2014

*February – July:*

- Citizens Advisory Committee meets
- Communities Advisory Committee meets

*March - April:*

- Citizens Survey

*July:*

- Recommendations from two advisory committees submitted to SATS

*August – December:*

- SATS develops a draft 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan being advised by the public input

### 2015

*January/February:*

- Draft 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan available for public review and comment

*March:*

- 2040 Long Range Transportation Plan finalized and adopted

## Resources Created to Guide the 2040 LRTP Update

Agricultural Routes Mapping  
Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan  
Crash Data Mapping  
Demographic Map

Demonstration of INVEST for a Corridor Project: Peoria Road  
Developable Land Mapping

Emergency Routes Mapping

Historic Sites Mapping

Intersection Safety List

Master Road Network Database

Maturing of Illinois Initiative: Springfield

Missing Road Links Mapping  
Thinking Beyond Transit:  
Transit Oriented Development  
in Springfield, IL

# Traveling into the Future

## Developing a Collective Vision of Travel

Updating the SATS Long Range Transportation Plan is a collaborative effort of our communities and begins with asking the people who live and work here how the transportation system can best serve their needs. Three distinct efforts have been made to engage a broad spectrum of interests in Phase I of the 2040 LRTP Update – PUBLIC INPUT.

### 1. Citizens Survey

A survey was conducted, both online and on paper, to hear from citizens on their perceptions of and needs related to all modes of transportation in the SATS planning area. Surveys were completed by 523 people who gave their opinions on safety, adequacy of connections to essential destinations, environmental & health impacts of travel, transportation system support of economic growth, experiences of traveling in the area, and the important issues to be considered in further developing the transportation networks. A particular effort was made to hear from people who do not traditionally participate in general outreach activities by working through organizations such as Contact Ministries and Senior Services of Central Illinois and distributing the survey to SMTD passengers on buses serving areas with high percentages of minority and low-income residents.

### 2. Citizens Advisory Committee

The SATS Public Participation Plan presents the various ways transparency will be maintained and public input will be facilitated. Formation of a Citizens Advisory Committee to advise on the update of the LRTP is a key element. The 2040 LRTP Citizens Advisory Committee includes representatives from Area Agency on Aging for Lincolnland, Inc., Faith Coalition for the Common Good, Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce, Inner City Older Neighborhoods, Mid-West Truckers Association, Sangamon Valley Local Emergency Planning Committee, Springfield Bicycle Club, Springfield Center for Independent Living, Springfield Road Runners Club, Springfield School District 186, Springfield Urban League, and citizen volunteers. The Committee first met in February 2014 and plans to have final recommendations to SATS by August. They are an engaged group with a diversity of perspectives. At least eleven meetings will have been held to facilitate development of recommendations by this committee.

### 3. Communities Advisory Committee

A second key element to the Public Participation Plan is bringing together all the communities in the SATS area that are not on the SATS planning body to coordinate transportation needs, networks, projects, and plans for the area. Representatives from the City of Leland Grove; Villages of Grandview, Jerome, Riverton, Rochester, Sherman, Southern View, and Spaulding; Townships of Ball and Rochester; and the Springfield Park District serve on this committee. Recommendations to SATS should be finalized by July after monthly meetings from February through June, 2014.



## SATS Membership & Meetings

### SATS Members

#### **Voting Members:**

IDOT Region 4, District 6  
City of Springfield  
Sangamon County  
Springfield Mass Transit District  
SSCRPC  
Village of Chatham

#### **Technical Advisors:**

Abraham Lincoln Capital Airport  
Federal Highway Administration  
Illinois Commerce Commission  
IDOT District 6 Local Roads & Streets  
IDOT Downstate Public & Inter-modal Transportation  
IDOT Office of Planning and Programming

### SATS Meetings

Technical Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday of the month, 8:30 AM

Policy Committee – 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday of the month, Noon

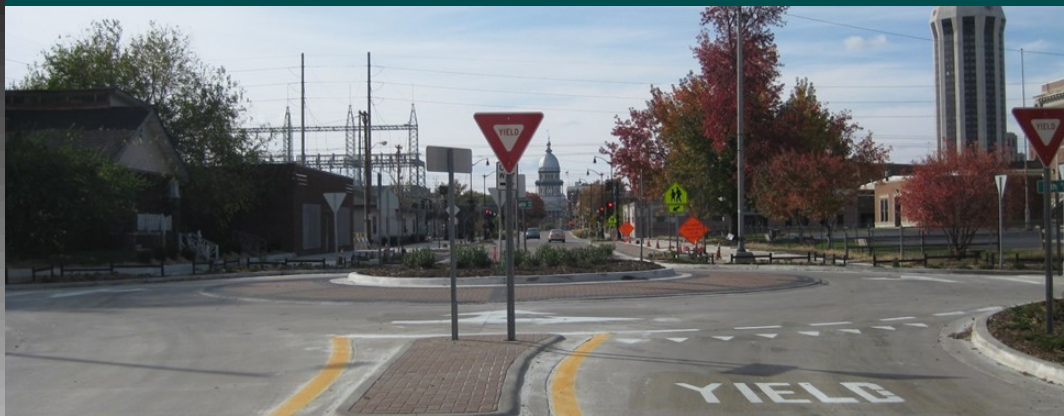
Location – Planning Commission office

(All meetings are open to the public.)

The Commission wishes to note that its transportation-related activities are funded with the assistance of our local partners, as well as our primary State partner, the Illinois Department of Transportation, and Federal partners, the Federal Highway and Federal Transit Administrations.







## The Transportation Landscape

The rapid changes in technology insert some real challenges into transportation planning over a 25-year period. How “smart” will cars and trucks be in a decade? In two decades? Will drones be delivering packages? Will cars drive themselves? Will energy costs lead to significant differences in how we travel and ship goods? Will public transportation be whisking us from place to place? Will we be traveling in ways that we cannot even imagine today?

While keeping an eye on the changing landscape of travel, there are things in the SSCRPC’s planning area the public can look to see in the near future:

- A new east-west road connection through Springfield. Look for construction of Stanford Avenue between Fox Bridge Road and Taylor Avenue to begin in the next couple of years.
- High-speed rail through Sangamon County. Look for safety improvements along the 3<sup>rd</sup> Street rail corridor in Springfield over the next year.
- Bottlenecks eliminated. Look for Dirksen Parkway to be widened north of Clear Lake Avenue within the next year.
- Innovative traffic flow and safety improvements. Look for flashing yellow left turn signals within the year. (See the SSCRPC website for information about how these work.)



- Public transportation expanded outside the current Springfield Mass Transit service area through the Sangamon/Menard Area Regional Transit (SMART) system which is expected to receive start-up vehicles within the next few months. Look for service to start this year.
- Expansion of the multi-use trail network. Look for the Sangamon Valley Trail to be extended six miles to the north in 2016.

## LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

### Major transportation projects on the planning horizon

- Multi-modal transfer center in Springfield’s downtown, including an off-street SMTD bus transfer facility interfacing with all other modes of travel, including high speed passenger rail.
- Widening of I-55 to six lanes through Springfield.
- Widening of 6th Street south of Stanford Avenue.
- Safety and access improvements on the 3rd Street rail corridor to provide access to high speed passenger rail (HSR) until rail corridors are consolidated.
- Extension of MacArthur Boulevard to Woodside Road.
- Development of an interconnected bicycle network.
- Expanded and interconnected sidewalk network.

## Public Engagement & Outreach

Transportation Group staff members attend several webinars over the course of a year to stay informed on changes occurring in the field and on new regulations, policies, and guidance from the U.S. Department of Transportation. During this past year Planning Commission staff was asked to give a presentation on a Federal Highway Administration sponsored webinar on their new online tool called INVEST (Infrastructure Voluntary Evaluation Sustainability Tool) to show how we used this tool to create a conceptual plan for a portion of the Peoria Road corridor illustrating the various elements that could be incorporated into a project to promote sustainability. Sustainability is a concept that includes social, economic, and environmental principles in a transportation project to enhance quality of life while meeting the transportation needs of today with an eye to the needs of the future. Staff also received and accepted an invitation to present this conceptual plan using INVEST at the annual national conference of the Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations.

# Planning for the Way We Grow

## The Work of the Commission's Development Planning Group

A large part of the work done by the Development Planning group involves carrying out the duties specified within local ordinances. This group administers the subdivision process for the City of Springfield and unincorporated Sangamon County. Those duties include determinations on the process through which a division of property may proceed. Those processes include tract surveys, minor subdivisions and conventional subdivisions.

In order to determine the process for a division the staff must take the time to conduct the research to determine if a division qualifies for an exemption under the Illinois State Plats Act. The staff must establish when a parcel was created to determine if the development qualifies for one of the provisions where a subdivision plat may or may not be required. The research requires the staff to review deeds and documents available in the Sangamon County Recorder's and Supervisor of Assessments' offices. After the research has been completed, the staff will inform the developer or property owner of the process they need to follow.

A tract survey is a process to divide land when a subdivision plat is not required. Tract survey approval is designed to ensure that all divisions of land comply with the State Plats Act, right-of-way, lot configuration requirements, and the zoning requirements of a particular jurisdiction. The SSCRPC staff coordinates this process with other departments to ensure that the division meets all requirements set forth by local ordinance. Staff is allowed one to three business days to inform the owner if the tract survey is approved or disapproved depending on the jurisdiction. The number of tract surveys approved from June 1, 2013 to May 31, 2014 was 112. This reflects a 3% decrease over the previous program year.

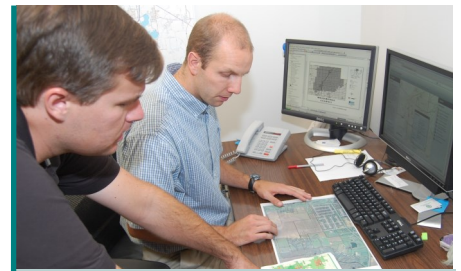
If an exemption is not available for a division to proceed through the tract survey process, then the development will need

to proceed through the subdivision process. The Land Subdivision Committee (LSC) of the SSCRPC provides a technical review of all subdivisions within the City of Springfield and unincorporated Sangamon County. "Subdivisions" include subdivision of land, but also Large Scale Developments, site development plans, Planned Experimental Developments and Planned Unit Developments, as defined in ordinance. The LSC meets once each month and makes recommendations to the SSCRPC, City Council or the County Board. The staff's responsibilities include the distribution of plans, posting of notification signs, review of the submittals, providing plan analysis and recommendations based on adopted comprehensive plans and local ordinances, advising the committee, and taking the meeting minutes. The staff also coordinates the review and tracks the development through the development process as well as answering any questions that the public might have.

From June 1, 2013, through May 31, 2014, the LSC reviewed 50 development plans. This represents an average of about 4.2 projects per month. The number of items reviewed compared to the last program year (55) represents a 9% decline. This is partially due to the most recent subdivision ordinance update that was adopted by the City of Springfield. However, this number is still higher than the program years ending in 2011 and 2012.

### 2014 Development Review

Location and Sketch Maps	12
Preliminary Plans	12
Final Plats	15
Site Development Plans	1
Large Scale Development Plans	3
Partial Plat of Vacations	5
Variance Requests	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>50</b>



## Projects During PY 2013-14

### Development Project Locator

The Land Subdivision Committee of the SSCRPC reviews subdivision related matters for the City of Springfield and unincorporated Sangamon County. The *Project Locator* web application allows the public to track the progress of a development through the subdivision process and review the submitted plans on-line. The project locator was set up in early 2013 and the staff updates and maintains the data on a regular basis to ensure the public is getting the most up-to-date information. Go to: <http://sangis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/TwoPane/main/index.html?apid=331910299ea8448390d3bc9a659e46cf>.

### Sangamon County Zoning Application

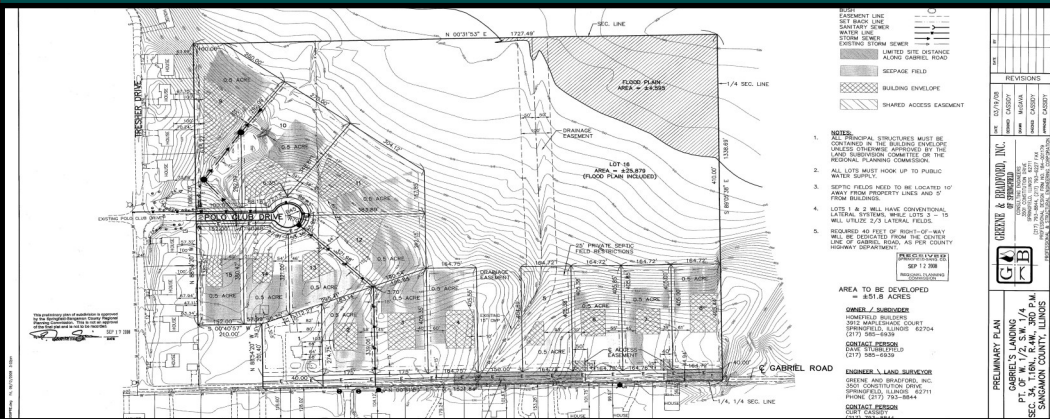
The *Sangamon County Zoning Interactive Web Application* allows the public to view the zoning classification of a particular area in unincorporated Sangamon County. Development Planning assists the county's zoning department with the maintenance of the data and the web application: Go to: <http://sangis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/TwoPane/main/index.html?apid=a687472455df4428a15a4e647b7fecdc6>.

### Update of the Neighborhood Associations List

This project works to update the list of neighborhood associations registered with the Planning Commission. This list is used to inform neighborhoods of development projects and other planning related items.

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## Bringing Planning to the Public Through Greater Engagement

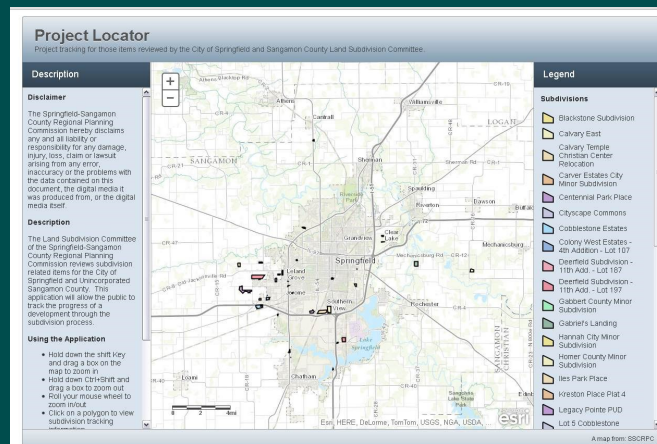
Transparency is an important part of the Development Planning Group's work. Certain actions to inform the public supported by the SSCRPC are mandated by ordinance. For example, City of Springfield ordinance requires that Planning Commission staff post public notice signs at development sites that have location and sketch maps or large scale development plans pending before the Land Subdivision Committee (LSC). Location and sketch maps in the City and the County subdivision jurisdictions also require that a public notice be sent to the newspaper approximately one week prior to the LSC public hearing.

LSC meetings are an important part of the Development Planning Group's efforts to inform the public. The Commission makes sure that registered neighborhood associations receive a copy of the LSC meeting agenda when they are distributed to LSC members, developers, and other interested parties. Proponents and opponents are allowed an opportunity to speak at the LSC meeting, if requested. Draft minutes are generally posted online within a few days of the Committee's meeting. Since mid-2013, staff has also maintained a project locator application that describes the status of projects and contains links to the most recent submitted development plans. The intent of the app is to help answer the public's questions about development projects in a specific area that will appear before the LSC. Several times per

month, staff also updates the project locator app on the SSCRPC website.

The SSCRPC's development group continues to look for new ways to keep the residents of Springfield and Sangamon County informed.

In the future, the Development Planning Group has a strategic focus to digitize subdivision records and to manage development review processes in the "cloud". In addition to the project locator, the group's staff wishes to have a cloud-based submission process for projects that could eliminate the need for paper plans for review. This effort is not yet beyond internal discussions, however, this is the outcome that SSCRPC staff is striving to reach. Staff has also begun to make progress to digitize the SSCRPC's 50+ year archive of development plans for Springfield and unincorporated Sangamon County. In the future, it is imagined that these plans will be available to the public in the cloud, making public access easier and more transparent.



## Projects During PY 2013-14 [Continued]

**Sangamon County Natural Area Inventory**—This web application allows the user to see which areas of Springfield and Sangamon County are located in areas identified by the Friends of the Sangamon Valley Natural Areas Inventory as sensitive. Grades of B, C, and D are shown on the map, with Grade B being the highest quality in Sangamon County. Go to: <http://sangis.maps.arcgis.com/apps/SocialMedia/index.html?apid=4ed357cd117d476eab27d40482846146>.

**Population Projections**—To assist in the updating of the Long Range Transportation Plan, the Development Planning staff assisted the Commission's Transportation Planning group in developing population projections through 2040 for those communities within the federally designated transportation Metropolitan Planning Area (MPA).

**GIS Coordinator**—Serve as the Geographic Information System (GIS) coordinator for the office. They assist other Commission staff with their GIS needs. These duties include: geodatabase development, map production, online applications and general technical assistance.

**Lincoln Funeral Processional Route Map**—To assist with this effort, staff provided route mapping and other technical assistance for the planning of the Springfield bicentennial event.

**Update Springfield Arterial Roadway Network Plan**—Assisted Springfield's Office of Public Works in the updating and mapping of the City's Arterial Roadway Network Plan.

**Local Comprehensive Plan Development**—Assists the Commission's Strategic and Comprehensive Planning group with the development of local comprehensive plans.

# Planning for Future Land Use

## The Work of the Commission's Land Use & Environmental Planning Group

How land is used — and the regulation of that use — undergirds much of community planning. It is, for example, a critical component of local comprehensive land use plans, it significantly affects transportation planning and infrastructure needs, and it is particularly relevant in development review. All of these Commission activities are dependent upon the planning that goes into land use, making land use decisions a fundamental aspect of efforts to enhance communities and enrich their futures.

It is also a critical component of what local government does, as the decisions that localities make concerning land use have both economic and social implications. For this reason it is important that this decision making be done objectively and professionally.

Ultimately, local decisions related to land use primarily come about through the zoning decisions municipalities make, and one of the primary tasks assigned to the Commission's Land Use and Environmental Planning (LU&E) group is in this area.

As per both Sangamon County and City of Springfield zoning ordinances, the Commission's LU&E group is charged with conducting an independent analysis of all zoning cases brought before the zoning bodies of these two jurisdictions, along with making a recommendation concerning the actions that those bodies might take. Since zoning meetings are held on a monthly basis, this work must be completed in a timely manner.

This is not a small task. For each case, LU&E staff must conduct a site visit to the subject property. If a petitioner is requesting to rezone a property, staff must identify the other uses of properties in the immediate area to determine if the requested zoning is compatible with those uses and the neighborhood. Staff must also review the municipality's comprehensive plan, to identify whether or not the requested zoning is consistent

with that plan, and also review how the area has developed, to determine if the requested zoning is consistent with the development trend in the area, as well as review past precedent and practice.

Often property owners will seek a variance of the zoning ordinance, allowing them to make certain changes to the use of the property that otherwise would not be allowed by the ordinance absent some legal relief. Variances are often requested for such things as changes in yard "setback" requirements, fence height, parking, and the like. In these cases the LU&E staff conducts a site review and considers the nature of development in the area to determine whether granting the variance would have a negative impact on adjacent properties.

Upon completion of the site visit the group's work is not done. The staff must compile an analysis of the request and formulate a recommendation. These staff analyses provide the respective zoning board with an overview of the case and are considered an important and helpful tool during the zoning hearing. A significant aspect of the analysis is the consideration of whether or not the petitioner seeking the rezoning or variance has provided the evidence necessary to find that the rezoning is appropriate, or demonstrates that any variances requested meet the Standards for Variation prescribed in state law and local ordinance.

Between July 1, 2013, and June 30, 2014, the LU&E staff completed 86 zoning case analyses in response to zoning cases filed in the City of Springfield, and 53 filed for properties in unincorporated Sangamon County. This total of 139 zoning cases is a 19% decrease from the previous program year, during which the staff completed 172 zoning case analyses. SSCRPC staff expected this decrease, as the previous year's total included a record number of cases filed in the City of Springfield.



## FLOODPLAIN MANAGEMENT & REGULATION ACTIVITIES

Sangamon County residents benefit from the recreational opportunities the various rivers, creeks and Lake Springfield provide. However, where there is water there can be flooding, and our area is no exception. As a result, there are properties that contain FEMA designated floodplain for which development is prohibited, or only allowed if the property owner obtains a floodplain development permit.

Development can include constructing and making substantial improvements to buildings, adding fill, constructing roads, storing materials such as gas storage tanks, and making channel modifications to a waterway.

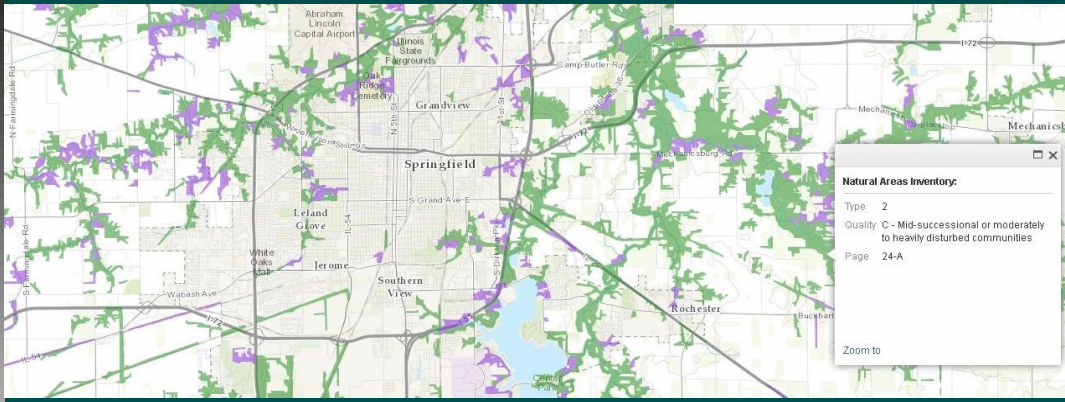
Sangamon County and Springfield participate in the National Flood Insurance Program (NFIP) which makes federally subsidized flood insurance available to residents who own property in the floodplain. Participation in the program requires local units of government to adopt floodplain regulations and agree to enforce the regulations by preventing unwise developments from increasing flood hazards to residents.

Any development in the floodplain is strongly discouraged. However, both City and County ordinances provide a mechanism for residents to obtain a floodplain development permit should there be no other option.

LU&E Planning staff are responsible for reviewing all floodplain development permit applications prior to allowing development to occur in the floodplain. Staff review the permit applications for adherence to state and federal floodplain regulations, oversees a review conducted by a licensed engineer, conducts site visits, and performs inspections during the construction process.

[Continued on next page]





## Keeping an Eye on the Future

### New Efforts Planned or Underway

**Floodplain, 5-year Cycle Visit:** In October, the regional Community Rating System (CRS) coordinator will conduct the 5-year cycle visit for unincorporated Sangamon County to document continued adherence to the county's floodplain regulations, and verify its level 8 rating (see Floodplain item P. 13). LU&E Planning staff is preparing for the visit by making improvements to the current outreach plan and increasing the level of some of the tasks with the goal of moving the county to a CRS level 7. Current participation in the CRS reduces flood insurance premiums for property owners required to purchase the insurance by 10%. If the county were awarded a level 7 rating, flood insurance premiums would be reduced another 5%, for a total of 15%.

**Natural Hazard Mitigation Planning:** Communities are strengthened when they work together. This will be the case as the local communities in Sangamon County join together to update the Natural Hazard Mitigation Plan under a grant the Illinois Emergency Management Agency awarded to the SSRPC.

The purpose of the plan is to reduce the loss of life and property due to natural disasters such as tornadoes, flooding, dam failure, earthquake, extreme heat and drought, mine subsidence and severe storms. Communities work together to identify mitigation measures that can be implemented prior to a disaster.

Any community that has a hazard mitigation plan that is compliant with the federal Disaster Mitigation Act is eligible for hazard mitigation grant funds from FEMA to conduct projects intended to reduce the impact of such events. FEMA regulations require the plan to be updated every five years in order to be eligible for continued funding.

LU&E Planning staff is coordinating the planning efforts needed to update the plan. Local communities and stakeholders have been invited to participate in the process by becoming members of the plan Task Force. This group will be comprised of not only community officials, but individuals who bring a broad spectrum of experience and expertise to enhance the quality of the plan. The opportunity for public involvement will be included

throughout the planning process and will be critical to the success of the project.

**Updating Sangamon County Comprehensive Land Use Plan:** With the completion of the Sangamon Regional Strategic Plan, efforts are now underway to update the land use plan for the unincorporated portions of the county. This plan will take into account goals and strategies identified in the Strategic Plan, plans that have been made by municipalities for their extra-territorial jurisdictions, as well as existing trends in development that have occurred since the last plan was adopted. LU&E staff will be working with the Commission's Comprehensive and Strategic Planning staff on this effort.

**Medical Cannabis Zoning:** With the passage of a state law allowing for the production and distribution of cannabis for medical purposes, new zoning ordinances must be crafted to address this use. The LU&E Planning group has developed a draft ordinance for this purpose, which could be a model for the region.

**Zoning Interactive Web Application:** LU&E staff played an important role in developing this application, recreating the County's zoning map as a on-line resource. This application enables the public to obtain access to County zoning information with just a click of a "mouse".

**Online Floodplain Information:** Information about owning property in the floodplain is now accessible online through the SSRPC website. Updates to this information database will be made with the goal of providing readily available access to information regarding specific individual properties.

## Floodplain (Continued)

Sangamon County also participates in the Community Rating System (CRS). This program encourages communities to exceed the requirements of participation in the NFIP and rewards those communities' extra efforts by providing a discount to residents required to purchase flood insurance. Those extra efforts include adopting more stringent regulatory guidelines, implementing additional public outreach programs, increasing floodplain green space, and implementing outreach programs to inform residents and stakeholders about floodplain insurance. The LU&E Planning staff regularly works with not only residents, but also with realtors, insurance agents and mortgage lenders to provide information about owning property in the floodplain.

Sangamon County currently has an CRS rating of 8. As a result, the residents of unincorporated Sangamon County who are required to have flood insurance obtain a 10% discount in rates. CRS communities submit information annually to the program coordinator to document compliance with the program. In addition, each participating community undergoes a rigorous on-site visit every five years to verify the rating. The cycle visit for Sangamon County will be this coming Fall.

## Enriching Communities Through Preservation

The preservation of historic places and structures is a key ingredient in enhancing and enriching communities as it stabilizes older communities and brings citizens together. Studies show that the primary desire of adults is a sense of stability, and historic buildings can provide that sense as well as provide a tangible link with the past that all can experience.

Among their many tasks, the LU&E Planning group provides staff support for the Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission (SCHPC). The SCHPC is responsible for the designation and protection of the county's significant historic resources. The Executive Director of the SSRPC serves as an ex officio non-voting member of the SCHPC.

The SSRPC also provides assistance to the City of Springfield's Historic Sites Commission (SHSC). By city ordinance, a staff member of the SSRPC must serve as a voting member of this Springfield commission. Currently the Executive Director of the SSRPC serves on this group. The Planning Commission is often called upon to provide analysis and guidance to the members of the SHSC.

# Going Forward: Challenges and Opportunities for the Commission

## Assessing some of the conditions facing the Commission in the new program year

As this report indicates, the Commission's efforts were very successful during the past program year. However, challenges and opportunities remain moving into the new one.

As was the case in the previous two program years, the major challenge this year grew from limitations in the staff resources available to address new planning questions and issues brought to the Commission by its principals that were not related to transportation planning. The association with transportation is relevant to this challenge as over half of the Commission's staff FTE (7.77 of 13 FTE) is funded for transportation-related activities. This means that this portion of the Commission's staffing is often unavailable to assist with other local planning needs.

This could partially be addressed through increased use of technology, but we are finding that we are also falling behind current planning practice in the application of new technologies and systems. This becomes increasingly troublesome for even routine tasks as many of the personal computers currently used are configured only for the Microsoft XP operating system, which will no longer be supported by that company. The Commission has worked with the County's information technology staff to explore the possibility of upgrading the existing equipment to support Windows 7, but without great success, leaving staff to continue with the obsolete operating system, or find ways to reduce cost to replace the existing system.

Additional tasks have also strained the Commission's efforts during the year. These included the staff time required to address additional Citizens' Efficiency Commission related requests for assistance, changes in federal and state requirements related to floodplain regulation and management, and changes in federal transportation programs under

the new transportation act — MAP-21 — that require the Transportation staff to take on additional tasks absent any additional funding to cover their costs.

There are, however, new demands for SSCRPC services that offer opportunities for growth.

The creation of the Regional Leadership Council for Sangamon County, which the Commission agreed to assist during the new program year, has brought to the fore a number of policy-related issues that the Commission's staff may be asked to address. This group may also be of singular importance in the implementation of many of the recommendations of the Citizens' Efficiency Commission, allowing the SSCRPC to provide both policy analysis and program improvement services to communities in the region.

The Commission also is now regularly asked to assist communities in the region with the development of comprehensive plans. This is in addition to efforts to assist them in the updating of their existing plans, the implementation of the Regional Strategic Plan, the creation of a land use plan for unincorporated Sangamon County, and activities that may result from both the state and federal governments' requirements that local problems be addressed in more regional ways.

Yet while the desire for more regional approaches continues to grow, there are also additional demands for a re-focusing on the needs of individual neighborhoods and better, more focused, planning to meet their needs.

All-in-all, the Commission anticipates interest in its role as advisor, planner, evaluator and leader to grow during the new program year, hopefully finding innovative ways to meet the challenges noted.



## Public Support for Planning

In 2012 the American Planning Association conducted a national survey of the public's attitudes toward community planning. Published in the APA's report, *Planning in America: Perceptions and Priorities*, the study found that:

- Community planning is seen as needed by a wide majority of all demographic groups.
- 72% of Americans believe that planning has a positive meaning, and residents of all sizes of communities support more planning (urban, 73%; suburban, 65%; small town, 67%; rural, 59%).
- Only 14% believe that market forces alone, without community planning, will help the economy and create more jobs; 66% believe that it takes both.
- Community planning, defined as "a process that seeks to engage all members of a community to create more prosperous, convenient, equitable, healthy and attractive places for present and future generations", is supported by 79% of the general public.
- 66% of the public believe that their own community needs more planning.
- Top priorities for local planning efforts and local funding priorities are closely aligned around a basic agenda: jobs, safety, schools, neighborhoods and clean water.
- Half of all Americans would like to be involved in community planning in the future, and 92% believe things work better with a plan.





## COMMISSION STAFF: Program Year 2014

### PLANNING COMMISSION STAFF

(as of June 1, 2014)

#### Administrative

**Norm Sims**, Executive Director

**Mary Jane Niemann**, Accounting Technician and Operations Assistant

**Gail Weiskopf**, Clerk Typist

#### Development Planning

**Joe Zeibert**, Senior Planner, Development Planning

**Steve Keenan**, Principal Planner, Development Planning

#### Land Use & Environmental Planning

**Molly Berns**, Senior Planner, Land Use Planning

**Abby Bybee**, Associate Planner, Land Use Planning

#### Strategic & Comprehensive

##### Planning

**Jeff Fulgenzi**, Senior Planner, Strategic & Comprehensive Planning

**Amy Uden**, Associate Planner, Policy Research & Analysis

#### Transportation Planning

**Linda Wheeland**, Senior Planner, Transportation Planning

**Dale Schultz**, Principal Planner, Transportation Planning

**Neha Soni**, Associate Planner, Urban Design & Transportation Planning

**Brian Sheehan**, Transportation Planning Specialist

### COUNTY ZONING DEPARTMENT STAFF

(as of June 1, 2014)

**Cyndi Knowles**, Zoning Administrator

**Brian Schackmann**, Liquor Code Enforcement Officer

**Trustin Harrison**, Zoning Inspector

**Jane Lewis**, Administrative Assistant

## Partnerships and Linkages During the Program Year

The SSCRPC's staff maintain a number of partnerships and linkages. Many of these involve advising and/or providing staff assistance to committees or other bodies established by the Commission (such as the Commission's Land Subdivision Committee and Executive Policy Board), while others involve partnerships with agencies and organizations that are relevant to and advance the Commission's mission. Some of these include:

**County:** Sangamon County Historic Preservation Commission; Sangamon County Public Health, Solid Waste and Zoning Committee; Sangamon County Zoning Board of Appeals.

**City of Springfield:** Springfield Historic Sites Commission; Springfield Planning and Zoning Commission; Downtown Springfield, Inc.; Greater Springfield Chamber of Commerce; Greater Springfield Chamber's Q-5 Initiative (Land Subdivision Advisory Committee, Development Policy Council, Executive Policy Council).

**Regional:** Citizens' Efficiency Commission for Sangamon County; the Regional Leadership Council of Sangamon County; Springfield Area Transportation Study; Sangamon County Citizens Survey Steering Committee; Sangamon Valley Emergency Planning Committee; SMTD Disabled Person Advisory Committee; Region 7 Human Service Transportation Planning Committee.

**State:** Route 66 Trail Executive Council; Illinois Greenways and Trails Council; Illinois Dept. of Transportation Travel Demand Modeling Group; Illinois MPO Advisory Council; Illinois Association of Regional Councils; IDOT Transportation Measures Technical Advisory Group; Landmarks Preservation Council; Illinois Association of Historic Preservation Commissions; Illinois Association of Floodplain and Stormwater Management.

**National:** American Planning Association; American Society for Public Administration; Association of Metropolitan Planning Organizations; National Association of Regional Councils; Urban Land Institute.

**ADVISING  
PLANNING  
EVALUATING  
LEADING**

*Touching Lives*

## About the Planning Commission

The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission (SSCRPC) serves as the joint planning body for Sangamon County and the City of Springfield, as well as the Metropolitan Planning Organization for transportation planning in the region.

The Commission works with other local units of government, public agencies and special districts throughout the region to promote orderly growth and redevelopment, and assists Sangamon County's communities with their planning needs. Through its professional staff, the SSCRPC provides overall planning services related to land use, housing, recreation, transportation, economic development, environmental issues, and also conducts various special projects. Its Executive Director also oversees the Sangamon County Department of Zoning which administers the zoning code and liquor licensing for the County.

The Commission has 17 members including representatives from the Sangamon County Board, Springfield City Council, special units of government, and six appointed citizens from the City and County.



## The Springfield-Sangamon County Regional Planning Commission

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July 2014

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